

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RIYADH 00068 241910Z
ACTION NEA-10

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O R 241545Z JAN 78 ZFF4
FM USLO RIYADH
TO USDOC WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMCONSUL CASABLANCE
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
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UNCLAS RIYADH 0068

ATHENS FOR RTDO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, XI, SA
SUBJECT: APR 78 BLDG AND CONSTRUCTION MISSION

REF: A) JIDDA 412, B) USDOC 1265

1. IN RESPONSE TO REF B WE REGRETABLY RECOMMEND THAT RIYADH BE DROPPED AS ONE OF STOPS FOR BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADE MISSION. IN DOING SO, WE WOULD REPEAT OUR BELIEF THAT RIYADH IS AN IMPORTANT AND EXPANDING COMMERCIAL CENTER. THIS CAPITAL CITY IS BEST DESCRIBED AS ONE HUGE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT - A SITUATION WHICH IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE - AND THUS, THIS TRADE MISSION IS PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE FOR RIYADH. GIVEN THIS AND OUR PAST SUCCESSES WITH TRADE MISSIONS IN RIYADLGN WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO EXPECT THIS MISSION WOULD HAVE USEFUL AND PROFITABLE VISIT HERE.

2. TRADE MISSION DOES, HOWEVER, NEED MINIMUM OF TWO FULL WORKING DAYS IN RIYADH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES. ANY SHORTER TIME WOULD CAUSE INAPPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF FRUSTRATION AND OF USELESSLY-SPENT
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PAGE 02 RIYADH 00068 241910Z

ENERGY COMPARED TO RETURN. SUCH THINGS AS FRUSTRATION OF ANOTHER AIRPORT STOP, A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR LOST BAGGAGE, REAL POSSIBILITY OF DELAYED ARRIVAL WHICH WOULD PRECLUDE CRUX OF ENTIRE STOP AND COULD EVEN AFFECT ONWARD TRAVEL TO DHAHRAN, AND WASTED TIME SINCE GROUP MUST CHECK IN ONE HOUR EARLY FOR MORNING FLIGHT, ALL THESE AND OTHER

FACTORS ARGUE FOR MISSION TO DELETE RIYADH AND FLY DIRECTLY FROM JIDDA TO DHAHRAN. THIS WOULD ADD TO TIME THESE POSTS COULD PROGRAM MISSION MEMBERS AND REDUCE FATIGUE AND FRUSTRATION ON MISSION MEMBERS.

3. THOUGH WE RECOMMEND OTHERWISE, USLO WILL BE HAPPY TO ARRANGE ONE-DAY

PROGRAM FOR MISSION IF USDOC AND MISSION SHOULD SO REQUEST. SHORT DURATION WOULD MAKE IT IMPRACTICAL TO ARRANGE ANY INDIVIDUAL APPOINTMENTS SO WE WOULD RECOMMEND STOP BE DEVOTED TO GROUP CALLS ON TWO OR THREE KEY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. STOP IN RIYADH WOULD, THEREFORE, BE BILLED AS OPPORTUNITY FOR MISSION MEMBERS TO DISCUSS SAUDI GOVERNMENT POLICY IN IMPORTANT COMMERCIAL AREAS, I.E. BOYCOTT, LICENSING OF FIRMS, ETC. RIYADH STOP WOULD NOT BE AIMED AT DIRECT SALES AS SUCH UNLESS INDIVIDUAL MISSION MEMBER ALREADY HAD SPECIFIC LEAD. IN THIS CASE, OF COURSE, WE WOULD ASSIST IN ARRANGING MEETING.

4. WE DO NOT BELIEVE LUNCHEON WITH SAUDI OFFICIALS IS VIABLE ASPECT OF PROGRAM IN RIYADH. LUNCHEON WILL BE VERY EXPENSIVE (BETWEEN 40 AND 50 DOLLARS PER PERSON) AND OFFICIALS ARE NOTORIOUS FOR NO-SHOWS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT EVEN AFTER OFFICIALS ACCEPTED INVITATION THAT NONE

WOULD APPEAR ON DAY OF LUNCHEON. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD WE RECOMMEND MISSION SCHEDULE ONE-DAY STOP IN RIYADH SOLELY WITH LUNCHEON

IN MIND. IT COULD, HOWEVER BE INCLUDED AS FEATURE OF STOP BUT STILL UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 RIYADH 00068 241910Z

KEEPING EMPHASIS ON GROUP APPOINTMENTS WITH SAUDI OFFICIALS IN THEIR OFFICES. THEN, IF LUNCHEON PROVED TO BE PRIVATE AFFAIR WITH ONLY TRADE MISSION MEMBERS PRESENT, VISIT TO RIYADH WOULD STILL HAVE SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT.

5. AGAIN, USLO MOST WILLING TO ARRANGE WHATEVER PROGRAM IN RIYADH MISSION MAY DESIRE BUT OUR BEST ADVICE IS TO DELETE RIYADH AS STOP IF MISSION UNABLE TO REMAIN HERE FOR TWO WORKING DAYS. GNEHM

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